

without a corresponding lowering of the rate for that tier). A complaint regarding a rate change for cable programming service or associated equipment may be filed against a cable operator only in the event of a rate change.

(b) Late-filed complaints will be dismissed with prejudice.

[58 FR 29753, May 21, 1993, as amended at 58 FR 46736, Sept. 2, 1993; 59 FR 17960, 17974, Apr. 15, 1994; 60 FR 35868, July 12, 1995; 61 FR 18979, Apr. 30, 1996]

§ 76.954 Initial review of complaint; minimum showing requirement; dismissal of defective complaints.

(a) The Commission will conduct an initial review of a complaint to determine if it meets the minimum showing required to allow the complaint to go forward. The minimum showing shall be satisfied if the complaint is filed using the standard complaint form described in § 76.951 and includes all information and attachments required by that form. A complainant will not be required, as part of the minimum showing, to provide the underlying information and calculations necessary to judge the cable programming service rate in question against the Commission's rate standards.

(b) A complaint that does not meet the minimum showing requirement described in paragraph (a) of this section will be considered defective. A defective complaint will be dismissed without prejudice to filing a corrected complaint as provided by § 76.955. The Commission will notify the complainant by mail of the dismissal. The filing of a complaint on the applicable form, but which is otherwise defective, will toll the limitation period established by § 76.953.

§ 76.955 Additional opportunity to file corrected complaint.

(a) If the Commission dismisses an initial complaint without prejudice pursuant to § 76.954, the complainant shall have one additional opportunity to cure the defect and file a corrected complaint.

(b) For a complaint filed on the applicable form but is otherwise defective, the complainant must cure the defect and file a corrected complaint with the Commission within 30 days

from the date of the Commission's dismissal notice. Failure to cure the defect and file a corrected complaint within this time period will result in dismissal of the complaint with prejudice.

§ 76.956 Cable operator response.

(a) Unless the Commission notifies a cable operator to the contrary, the cable operator must file with the Commission a response to the complaint filed on the applicable form, within 30 days of the date of service of the complaint. The response shall indicate when service occurred. Service by mail is complete upon mailing. See § 1.47(f) of this chapter. The response shall include the information required by the appropriate FCC Form, including rate cards, channel line-ups, and an explanation of any discrepancy in the figures provided in these documents and the rate filing. The cable operator must serve its response on the complainant via first class mail.

(b) The burden shall be on the cable operator to prove that the service rate or equipment charge in question is not unreasonable. The cable operator may carry its burden in the following manner:

(1) For a service rate at or below the permitted level, by providing information and calculations that demonstrate that the rate in question falls at or below the permitted level;

(2) For a service rate that exceeds the permitted level;

(i) By providing proof that the cable system has reduced the rate for the cable programming service at issue to a level at or below the permitted level; or

(ii) By providing detailed cost-based information that demonstrates that the rate in question is reasonable despite the fact that it exceeds the permitted level.

(3) For a charge for equipment installation or rental, by providing information that demonstrates that the charge is based on the cable operator's actual cost.

(c) In addition to responding to the merits of a complaint, the cable operator may also move for dismissal of the complaint for failure to meet the minimum showing requirement. Any such